

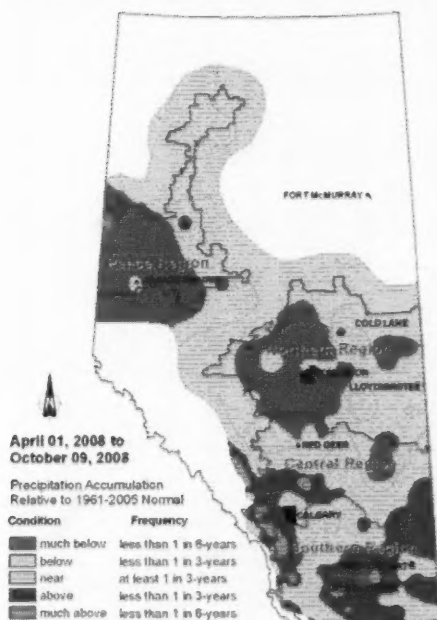
## Crop Conditions as of October 9, 2008

Weather conditions have been mainly favorable during the last two weeks, with temperatures above seasonal levels and reaching record highs in many areas of the province. Crop harvest has been progressing rapidly, and is virtually complete for major cereals and oilseeds (see Table 1). Provincially, 91 percent of the crop is already in the bin, compared to 60 percent two weeks ago. Harvest lags behind in the Central Region, specifically, areas west of Highway 2 and the Three Hills/Morrin area. The majority of these crops were either seeded late in spring or damaged by hail, which has resulted in some secondary growth. Crop harvest in Alberta is expected to wrap up in a week or two, provided the weather co-operates.

Strong winds on October 7 caused some crop damage, especially for canola in the swath. In some areas of the province, crop yields are higher than earlier expectations. Estimates of 2008 crop yields vary significantly across the province. Crop yields are generally favourable in the Southern Region, but poor in many western parts of the Peace Region. Elsewhere in the province, crop yields are mostly above average. Overall, provincial yields for major cereals and oilseeds are estimated to be higher than their 10-year averages. For specialty crops, harvest is near completion, except for potatoes, dry beans and sugar beets, with yields ranging from average to above average.

The recent frost, coupled with other adverse factors such as rain showers, has resulted in some deterioration in crop quality. As a result, crops harvested recently are of lower quality, compared to those combined earlier. Overall, grade estimates are average for barley and canola, and above average for spring wheat and durum. Preliminary results of early samples (for 2008 crops in the bin) indicate that nearly 80 percent of hard red spring wheat and durum could be graded as No. 1 or No. 2. About 17 percent of barley could be of malt quality, while 80 percent of canola could be graded as No. 1.

With respect to tame hay production (from all cuts), yields are average to below average for dryland hay, and average for hay under irrigation. The majority of hay is of good quality. Pasture conditions in the province are reported as 27 percent poor, 44 percent fair, 27 percent good, and two percent excellent.



In some areas of the province, producers are concerned about weed infestations. Also, low soil moisture reserves have been reported in many areas. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as 13 percent poor, 37 percent fair, 45 percent good, and five percent excellent, while the rating of sub-surface moisture is 27 percent poor, 35 percent fair, 35 percent good, and three percent excellent.

**Table 1: Alberta Crop Harvest Progress, 2008**

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	91%	89%	94%	93%	97%	92%
Durum Wheat	89%	93%	94%	93%	97%	90%
Oats	91%	86%	92%	88%	95%	90%
Barley	93%	86%	95%	93%	97%	92%
Canola	85%	87%	92%	91%	90%	90%
Dry Peas	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
All Crops	91%	88%	93%	92%	94%	91%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

*Please note this is the last Alberta Crop Report for the 2008 crop season.*

*Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.*

## **REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:**

*The 2008 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:*

### **Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)**

- Harvest for major cereals and oilseeds is virtually complete, with 91 percent of the crop in the bin. Crops still in the field are those either seeded late in spring or damaged by hail, which has resulted in some secondary growth. Some hail-damaged crops have been salvaged as silage or greenfeed. Also, strong winds on October 7 resulted in some yield losses, particularly for canola in the swath. For specialty crops, harvest is near completion for lentils, chick peas, and mustard seeds, while sugar beets harvest has just begun. For dry beans and potatoes, the harvest progress is 70 percent, and 80 percent, respectively.
- Overall, yields are above average for major crops, and average to above average for specialty crops. Grade estimates for major crops are favorable, although frost resulted in some deterioration in the quality of crops harvested recently.
- Conditions of winter cereals seeded this fall range from fair to excellent. Third cut hay under irrigation has come off mostly in fair to good quality. Pasture conditions are reported as 12 percent poor, 39 percent fair, 44 percent good, and five percent excellent.

### **Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)**

- Crop harvest is estimated at 88 percent complete in the region. Crops still in the field are mainly in areas west of Highway 2 and some central parts of the region. Much of these crops were either seeded late in spring or damaged by hail. The strong winds on October 7 resulted in some yield losses. As well, there has been some deterioration in crop quality, due to frost.
- In some areas, crop yields are higher than earlier expected. Overall, yield estimates for the major crops range from average to above average, while crop quality is expected to be below average.
- In general, conditions of winter cereals seeded this fall range from fair to good. Pasture is reported as 18 percent poor, 48 percent fair, 32 percent good, and two percent excellent.

### **Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)**

- Weather conditions have been mainly favorable during the last two weeks, allowing harvest to progress rapidly. Overall, 93 percent of the crop is now in the bin. Crop yields are estimated to be above average in most areas of the region. As to quality, grade estimates range from average to above average for major cereals and oilseeds, based on the preliminary results of early samples.
- Winter cereals seeded this fall are mostly in good condition. Pasture is rated as 36 percent poor, 47 percent fair, and 17 percent good.

### **Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)**

- Harvest is estimated at 92 percent complete in the region. Crops still in the field are mostly canola and oats, which were seeded late in spring. Overall, yield estimates for major cereals and oilseeds are above average in most areas of the region. With respect to quality, grade estimates for major crops range from average to above average, based on the preliminary results of early samples.
- Winter cereals seeded this fall are rated mostly as good. Pasture is reported as 45 percent poor, 37 percent fair, and 18 percent good.

### **Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)**

- The recent cool, damp weather conditions have delayed the completion of crop harvest in the region. Overall, 94 percent of the crop has been harvested. In the southern and western areas of the region, crop yields range from below average to well below average, due to the dry weather conditions experienced in the summer. Crop yields are generally above average in the northern parts of the region, mainly as a result of favourable soil moisture reserves during most of the crop season. Overall, crop yields in the region are estimated to be below average, while crop quality is estimated to be average.
- Winter cereals seeded this fall are mostly in good condition. Pasture conditions are reported as 27 percent poor, 47 percent fair, 25 percent good, and one percent excellent.

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